

1. The Catalogue of Ships (?) (Dow, Sterling, "The Greeks in the Bronze Age" in the Language and Background of Homer, Kirk, 1960)

p. 156, 157 During the entire next period, Late Minoan III, or more generally Late Bronze III (formerly called "Mycenaean" but that is no longer possible), Crete was reduced to being isolated and quiet. That is the evidence of archaeology. Except for what the Homeric epics, and most specifically the Catalogue of Ships allege about participation in the Trojan Expedition, Crete has no part in the events of LB III. It seems that Mykenai, after the destruction, left Crete to itself for some time. That outside power had been there in full control: the Linear B tablets make that plain.

p. 159 The Catalogue of Ships, however doubtful its division of the Argolid into two, may well echo historical truth in not making the relation (not, of course, the absolute figures) of Agamemnon's naval power to the rest of Greece resemble that of Athens later. Agamemnon has available 160 ships, of which he loans the Arkadioi 60; the implicit suggestion that he could man only 100 is in the direction of realism. The next largest power, Pylos, has 90; then come Tiryns and Crete each with 80.

2. Walls.

p. 160 The bronze age is crowded with problems, of which one of the most intractable has been the walls of Tiryns. . . .

How could Troy stand a ten-year seige if it were so small that a swift runner, as D. L. Page points out, could cross it lengthwise in some 25 seconds? . . .

The walls were built as defences against more remote enemies.

Troy. If this view of Bronze Age fortifications is acceptable, the expedition against Troy can be explained in simple terms. The old notion that Troy obnoxiously controlled the Dardanelles, and thus Black Sea commerce, by levying toll on shipping, or on goods trans-shipped, is happily defunct. There was no such commerce, and the destruction of Troy VIIa did not open it up. Another explanation of the war is needed.

Like all such forts, Troy VIIa held royal treasure. It was not the rich place that Troy VI had been, but the prospective plunder was worth the effort. Epic poetry later altered the purpose to a romantic one, and glamorized the whole expedition, just as epic poetry would be expected to do.

A few facts appear to survive criticism. There was a Greek expedition against Troy VIIa; Mykenai under Agamemnon commanded it; ~~numerous~~ allies took part. The fort was packed with people, and proved hard to capture. The Greeks succeeded, after which they pillaged, burned, and departed. Epic exaggerated all the details, especially the size of the Greek force, and the time it took. Gross inaccuracies about the site crept in: they would not worry epic poets. So much seems clear.